



National Start! Walking Day 2010



National Start! Walking Day: Ideas for the Big Day

National Start! Walking Day is a day to kick off a commitment to healthy living. And there are so many ways to do that! Below is a list of ideas that you can use leading up to the event, on the day of the event, and after the day is over.

Before the Big Day

Building excitement is an important part of the day. There are many ways to do this including:

- **Send e-mails** (use our templates)
- **Place desk drops on employees' desks.** Examples are stress balls, Start! stickers or just a flyer. Visit shopstart.org for some options.
- **Have your CEO or President send company-wide voicemails.** (Use our templates as a guide.)
- **A week before the event,** kick off a walking competition between your senior leaders. Give them all pedometers and ask them to input their steps each day into our MyStart! Online tracker. The winner and their department could receive some sort of reward — free jeans day, free lunch or some time off!
- **Setting a goal or making a pledge** are often great ways for people to kick off their healthy lifestyle. Create a shoe cutout, and provide one for each employee as a desk drop ahead of the event. Ask each employee to write down one goal or pledge to start living healthy on the shoe cutout. Ask them to all bring their shoe cutout to the rally and tape all the cutouts to a wall. You'll have an amazing display that you can keep up as a reminder to employees about their commitment. Incorporate this pledge into the Start! Summer Walking Countdown mentioned at the bottom.

Choosing Your Event

- **Wear sneakers.** The easiest way to get your employees motivated is to allow them to wear sneakers at work. If your dress code doesn't permit sneakers, then encourage employees to wear Start! buttons, stickers or green shirts.
- **Host a walk.** Set a time for your senior leaders to lead employees on a 30-minute walk. This could be indoors by creating a Start! Walking path, or outdoors.
- **Have a rally.** Kick off the day with a rally. Ask your CEO or other senior leader to address employees using the information in this guide or in our presentation. Announce the start of the Start! Summer Walking Countdown. (Information is shown below under After the Day.)
- **Go Green.** Walking isn't just healthy — it's eco-friendly! Encourage your employees to wear as much green as possible for the big day, as well as their sneakers. You'll have quite a display as employees walk around the building.
- **Have a wellness seminar.** Create a few breakout sessions for interested employees including:
 - A how-to activity seminar with your local fitness center to educate your employees, such as showing them the proper way to stretch.
 - A local nutritionist or dietitian to talk to your employees and answer their main questions about healthy eating.
 - A hospital or local clinic to do cholesterol, blood pressure and other types of screenings.
 - A heart disease survivor to speak to your employees about his or her experience.
- **Have a really big potluck.** Using the recipes in our toolkit, ask employees to bring their favorite dish, so that after the rally, everyone can have a heart-healthy meal.



After the Event

Healthy living doesn't stop after one day. Use National Start! Walking Day to keep the momentum going by launching a six-week program for health. We've included everything you need to motivate your employees — tips, articles and walking plans.

Start! Summer Six Week Walking Countdown

For the next six weeks your encouragement can help keep your employees walking and eating well. Included in this guide are six weeks' worth of tips, articles, walking plans and recipes. Use each one as directed to keep your employees motivated.

- **42 Tips** — Send one to your employees via voicemail or e-mail each day of the six-week walking program.
- **Articles** — Send one to kick off each week via e-mail or as a desk drop.
- **Walking plans** — This is a beginner walking plan, and you can send one each day or each week.
- **Recipes** — Send one each week via e-mail.

Ways to make it more exciting...

- **Kick off** a six-week walking competition on National Start! Walking day.
- **Ask your employees to join MyStart! Online** and start tracking their activity.
- **Allow your employees to form walking clubs** and encourage competition between them.
- **Have another rally** or a picnic to celebrate the start of summer and six weeks of health.
- **Celebrate your employees' success** in walking and lifestyle changes at the Start! Heart Walk. Have fun and raise funds to save lives from America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers — heart disease and stroke. Find details for your local Start! Heart Walk at StartHeartWalk.org

National Start! Walking Day is about fighting heart disease and stroke, but it's also about having fun and creating camaraderie. Don't forget to enjoy the day.

Good luck!



National Start! Walking Day How-To Guide

On **National Start! Walking Day** (the first Wednesday in April), people throughout the United States lace up their sneakers and come together to help fight heart disease, the nation's No. 1 killer.

You can celebrate the day in the workplace, at schools, in neighborhood walking groups and in local clubs. Before you get started, learn heart-health tips and read some great articles, get a walking plan to keep you motivated and healthy, and learn how to celebrate your success.

What you will find in this guide:

Free toolkit includes everything you need to put on a great event! You'll find resources such as:

- **Planning Guide**
 - Introduction to our celebration
 - How to get Leadership sign-off
 - Ideas for your event
 - Using our health information
 - Using our resources
- **E-mail and Voicemail Examples**
 - For Management
 - For Employees
- **Ideas for Your Event**
- **Posters and Flyers**
- **Healthy Information Presentation**
- **Healthy Recipes**
- **6 Weeks of Healthy Living Tips**
- **6-Week Beginner's Walking Plan**
- **6 articles on Healthy Living**



Getting Started

National Start! Walking Day is a day to get active and kick off healthy lifestyles in your company or organization or in your circle of friends. It's easy to get started with this guide, plus our great promotional resources and health information. Start here with our step-by-step action plan.

Step 1: Get your management to sign off

If you need approval to celebrate **National Start! Walking Day**, use our e-mail template. It has great information for your leadership about why healthy employees are good for the company.

Step 2: Choose your date

National Start! Walking Day is April 7, but you can set a different date if it works better for your company. Your **Start! Walking Day** can be any day! Once you choose a day, make sure you mark your employees' calendars right away, and use one of our e-mail templates to build awareness. You can also start sending daily tips, daily stretches and a daily walking plan to get employees moving.

Step 3: Choose your event

We have lots of great ideas from other companies and individuals who have celebrated **National Start! Walking Day** with us. Take a look at our **Start! Walking Day** Event Ideas in this resource packet.

Step 4: Start! planning your event

Use the checklist in this guide to make sure you've covered all the details—from food to e-mails to healthy living tips.

Step 5: Start! spreading the word

Date set? Now start promoting your event! Use the e-mails and health information we've provided. Then hang posters and flyers in break rooms, in restrooms and meeting areas to build momentum. You can download posters from the **Start! Walking Day** Web site, or purchase printed ones at www.shopstart.org.

Step 6: Celebrate!

Take a breath, and **Start!** walking. Today is the day that you'll pledge to live a longer, stronger and healthier life.



E-mail and Voicemail Templates

Use the text below to promote your company's participation in **National Start! Walking Day**. Customize it to fit your events and/or insert it into any of the applicable National Start! Walking Day templates. You can also use it for company-wide voicemails.

Talking Points/E-mail to Management for Event Approval:

To [Insert name]

Health care is one of the most significant cost pressures facing Americans today. In fact, health problems cost corporate America nearly \$226 billion annually in productivity losses. Consider these facts:

- **Almost 65% of American adults (135 million +) are overweight or obese**—and this number continues to grow;
- **Sedentary jobs have increased 83% since 1950**; and
- **Americans work 164 more hours a year than 20 years ago.**

The good news is that the American Heart Association's Start! movement can play an important role in getting our employees and our nation healthier.

I would like your approval to kick off a healthier way of living for our employees by celebrating **National Start! Walking Day**. The official day is Wednesday, April 7, but we can have our own celebration anytime. We'll get free resources to help our employees get on a healthier path.

This is a great cause and an opportunity for our company.

Why? Because ...

- **We want our community to know we care.**
- **We want our employees to be empowered** and see how their jobs tie in with quality of life.
- **It will increase morale** and team building at our company.
- **It will save billions of dollars** in health insurance and increase productivity by promoting a healthier workforce.

But most importantly, we should participate to help stop heart disease and stroke, our nation's No. 1 and No. 3 killers, and save lives.

Thank you

[INSERT NAME OR COMMITTEE NAME]



Announcement E-mail/Voicemail to Employees

Subject Line: Make a Difference by Walking!

Content:

Walking is so easy. Just put one foot in front of the other. Step by step, day after day, you walk to make progress. Every day we take thousands of steps to get where we need to go.

Now we can take steps toward a healthy workplace and support the American Heart Association.

On Wednesday, April 7, [insert company name] will join the American Heart Association in celebrating **National Start! Walking Day**. It is a day to challenge ourselves and our nation to get heart healthy, get fit and fight the No. 1 killer of Americans – heart disease. To help in this fight, we will have several events on this day including:

- [INSERT EVENT – e.g., rally, CEO speech, walk across campus, kick off the Start! Heart Walk]
- [INSERT EVENT]

Mark your calendars now. More details will be coming soon!

[INSERT NAME OR COMMITTEE NAME]

Second Announcement E-mail/Voicemail with Details

Don't forget: On Wednesday April 7, we'll be celebrating **National Start! Walking Day** with the American Heart Association.

Why? Because physical inactivity is a huge national problem. Seventy percent of Americans don't get enough exercise. That's true for many of us right here at [INSERT COMPANY NAME]. And it means we're at greater risk for heart disease, stroke and other blood vessel diseases.

But we're not going to take it sitting down.

On April 7, we'll join thousands of men and women at companies across America as they pledge to walk to fight heart disease.

Here's what you can do to join in the celebration:

- **Show your support** and wear sneakers to work on April 7.
- **Enjoy heart-healthy foods** like fruits and vegetables, lean meat and whole grains.
- **Join our all-staff rally** at [INSERT TIME] at [INSERT LOCATION] and pledge to live a healthier lifestyle!
- **Since you'll be wearing your sneakers**, we challenge you to take your first of many 30-minute daily walks on April 7. Follow our designated walking path or another route to start a habit of daily walking at work.
- **Visit StartWalkingNow.org** and use the American Heart Association's free tips, tools and trackers to keep motivated on your walking program and to sign up to participate and raise funds for your community's **Start! Heart Walk**.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for [INSERT TIME] on April 7 to join us in our celebration [INSERT LOCATION]. See you there!

[INSERT NAME OR COMMITTEE NAME]



Day Before Event E-mail/Voicemail

Don't forget: Tomorrow is our **National Start! Walking Day** celebration! Be sure to join us for our rally and a short walk. Most of all, don't forget to wear your sneakers! Meet us at [INSERT LOCATION] tomorrow at [INSERT TIME]. Don't be late!

Post Event E-mail/Voicemail

Thanks to everyone who joined us to celebrate **National Start! Walking Day**. We had a great turnout and a lot of commitment to get healthy and get fit. [ADD MORE HERE IF DESIRED, i.e. announcement of winners, pledges, etc.]

But we can't get healthy in one day. So we're launching a Start! Summer Six-Week Walking Countdown, courtesy of the **American Heart Association's Start! movement**. Every week for the next six weeks, we'll be sending you everything you need to get you ready for summer. You'll get:

- **A delicious, heart-healthy recipe** that you can try at home;
- **Daily health tips** through [E-mail or Voicemail];
- **A great new article** that will help guide you through the ups and downs of getting healthy; and
- **A daily walking plan** for beginners. If you've never walked for health before, start with this plan to get going!

[INSERT IF YOU ARE INVOLVED IN START! HEART WALK]

Don't forget that part of fighting heart disease, the No. 1 killer, is helping the American Heart Association fund lifesaving research. We can do that by spreading the word and raising funds from our friends and family for the [INSERT CITY NAME] Start! Heart Walk on [INSERT DATE].

Thanks and let's get Started!

[If applicable, include information about another rally or event at the end of the six weeks]

Daily E-mail for Start! Summer Six-Week Countdown

Below are some tips for sending your daily e-mail with tips, the walking plan or the article.

- **Use the countdown** theme by spelling out how many days are left, e.g., 30 days.
- **Use the countdown in reverse** by announcing which day of the countdown you're on, e.g., Day One, Day Two.
- **Ask for feedback** on the tips you're sending. For example, if you provide a tip on healthy substitutions, ask your staff to send in their tips, then share them with the company the next day.
- **Ask employees to make the recipes** and share pictures of their creation that you can share with the staff.
- **Don't overwhelm your staff** with too many messages. Use different mediums, e.g., send daily tips through voicemail or send one e-mail a week with the walking plan for the week, the recipe and the article.